

A cross point switch is configured to select from one of a first stream of ATM cells and a second stream of ATM cells, the first stream and the second stream being identical, and is further configured to select and substitute the second stream for the first stream upon detection of an error condition in the working circuitry operation on the first stream. The working circuitry, which is located on an interface module, is configured to receive and operate on the first stream of ATM cells. The protection circuitry, which is located on a redundant interface module, is configured to receive and operate on the second stream of cells. The protection circuitry and the working circuitry are functionally identical and synchronized to each other so that switching occurs from one stream to the other without interruption of network service.